THE PANAMA CANAL.

IV—THE FORCE.

By FREDERIC J. HASKIN.

Special Correspondence The Washington Herald.

Culebra, Canal Zone, July 4.—The impression one gets from a stay among the men who constitute the American contingent of the isthmian canal force is that every man seems to feel himself the owner of the canal, and is anxious to get the job completed as soon as possible, in order that he may begin to get income from it instead of suffering a perennial outgo. Every one of the 5,000 or more Americans connected with the undertaking is deadly in earnest. He is proud of the record that is being made, and seems to be imbued with the desire to have a hand in the making of this record. The time for loafers, time servers, drunkards, and shirkers is past.

A weeding-out process has been going on for a year now. The inducements which can be held out are strong enough to attract good men, and the commission no longer find itself under the necessity of tolerating incompetence or indifference. The men who care more for the "cup that cheers" than for the canal soon find themselves "canned," as they say on the isthmus when a man loses his position. Now and then you see one of these. He has either lost his place or has been reduced in position. He is the only man on the isthmus that has a word to say against the work. He threatens all sorts of exposures. He will tell you that he has a friend in Congress, and that he is going to have an investigation that will reveal shameful conditions. He, perhaps, intends going to Peru, or some other place where they pay good wages and appreciate good men—that is, if he can get the passage money. But, without exception, it is all a kick because he has lost a job or has been dropped to a lower position.

Everybody else is satisfied. Most of the men in the construction work are all old hands at the business. They have come in from everywhere. Some of them have spent years in construction work in tropical countries, and call themselves "tropical tramps." But they have no aversion to hard work. Years of residence in the tropics have inured them to climatic conditions, and years of experience have taught them to care for their health. They have known conditions elsewhere, and are qualified to speak. Without exception, they will tell you that they make more money and have every condition of construction work better than anywhere else they have ever been. I met a foreman of one of the big dirt yards—the one at Pedro Miguel, where they make up the dirt trains for the big dump at La Boca. He told me he had been on construction work in the United States, in Peru, in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Brazil, and that nowhere had he been able to save as much money as on the isthmian canal. He said that everything that men could reasonably ask was given them. I heard the same thing from a hundred sources, from men who have opportunity to know. At the La Boca dumps I met several men who had been on construction work in the States for years; and they, without exception, declared that conditions down here, 2,400 land miles from New York, were better than they had ever known on big construction jobs in the very heart of the States.

From the chief engineer down, it seems that the best talent obtainable has been secured for the prosecution of the work. The engineers of the construction department are all men who have made good in their respective fields. For instance, Civil Engineer Sayrille, who has charge of the experiments at the Gatun Dam, was selected for that work because of his proven ability in connection with the Wachusetts Dam, near Boston, an engineering problem of a similar nature as the construction of the Gatun Dam. These men also know how to get all hands under them to doing a maximum amount of work, and are accomplishing wonders by combining the intelligent direction of those higher up with the main strength and awkwardness of the illiterate Spaniard and the ignorant West Indian negro.

Nearly every American member of the force has some pet ambition in connection with the work. There is Capt. Michaelson, of the big sea-going dredge Ancon, which can suck up a half-million cubic yards of earth a month and carry it out to sea. His pet ambition is to pilot the first ship through the canal. He says he intends to stick to the work until the job is finished, if his health allows, and then he hopes to be the head pilot at the big celebration when the canal is finished.

Another employe with a worthy ambition is Paymaster's Clerk Page. He already has the record of being the oldest employe in point of service on the canal. He has been connected with the canal project for twenty-two years. He was on the pay force under the old French regime, and was inherited by the new company with the other assets of the canal. He was employed by the Americans when they began operations, and wants to see the job finished. He can pay off as many men in a given time as any man on the isthmus, and the mistakes he makes are as few and far between as four-leaved clovers.

There are nearly 9,000 white people in the Canal Zone, out of a total population of more than 35,000. Of these about 1,300 are women and 1,100 are children, who live in Canal Commission quarters. About 17 per cent of the white men in the Zone are aliens, mostly Spaniards and Italians; but only a very small per cent of the women and children are not Americans. The working force averages about 2,500 men with the Canal Commission, and about 6,500 with the Panama Railroad. Approximately, 11,000 are at work on the excavations. On dredging there are some 5,000 at work. On other contributory construction work there are about 5,000 engaged, making a force of approximately 21,000 at work on the construction work of all kinds on the canal.

There are slightly more than 200 women employed on the canal, of whom about 90 per cent are with the commission and the remainder are with the Panama Railroad. The highest salary paid to a woman is $175 a month and the lowest $50. The average is about $73. It is not the policy of the commission to employ many women, and those it does employ are mainly related to men living in married quarters who furnish them a home. The commission finds that it would cost more proportionately to furnish homes for women than for men.

No one can imagine the difficulties that beset the Americans who manage the great work of digging the canal. Many is the day when it rains two or three inches in an hour or two. Of course, this makes veritable seas of mud of the big dumps where they deposit the excavated material, and these seas are almost without bottom. To stop hauling until these dried out would be out of the question, for it would cut down the total monthly excavations very seriously. On the other hand, to run their dirt trains on the dumps means that many of them will literally sink into the mud. Yet the dump foremen, the yardmasters, and the others in command courageously take the responsibility, and the work goes forward. Sometimes it is hours and hours before they can get a train off of a sunken track, but here in the Canal Zone no one ever says die, and the work goes merrily on, rain or no rain.

No one in the States ever saw it rain much harder than it did here one day not long ago. In less than two hours nearly three inches of rain had fallen. And yet when I asked the division superintendent how much dirt they had gotten out of Culebra that day he handed me the cheering information that it had amounted to 40,000 cubic yards of material, which is at the rate of 1,000,000 cubic yards a month for Culebra Cut alone. Riding on a dirt train after a rain, I asked the conductor how he managed to keep his orders dry while such a downpour was falling. "Orders be hanged!" he replied. "I have to carry everything in my mind when these rains fall. Even rubber coats will not keep one dry during these Panama rains." And he went on his way, singing, as if he didn't mind such a shower more than a duck would.

The steam-shovel engineers of the canal hold the record as being about the only people in the employ of the United States who ever conducted a successful strike against the government for higher wages. They were getting $185 a month, with six weeks' leave with pay and quarters besides, but they thought it was not enough. They struck, and the force dwindled from sixty-five to thirteen. New men were secured, but things did not go well, and the President and his advisers decided to give them their present wages, $210 per month. This brought all the other classes of steam shovel and train men proportionate increases.

The average length of time Americans stay on the isthmus is a little more than two years. There is something enervating in the climate, which, together with the lack of opportunities for rational diversion, seems to make a man, after he has been here two or three years, have longings for home which he cannot overcome. During the wet season the winds seem so laden with moisture that they pass men by unable to cool their brows. On the whole, it is very depressing—though it is not unhealthful.

A construction engineer, who has to be out in the hot sun all day long, told me that in the twenty months he has been on the isthmus he had never had a headache from heat. Sunstrokes are all but unknown.

On the whole, Uncle Sam has employed on this great job as fine a force of workers as can be found anywhere. These men are terribly in earnest. Before them the dirt is flying, barriers are being broken down, and the promise of hope is being redeemed by the assurance of success. This canal force is, indeed, a noble army, and there can be no doubt that it will succeed in cutting the mighty ditch that will join in wedlock the waters of the two greatest oceans of the globe.

To-morrow—The Panama Canal—V. The Gatun Dam.

IN THE ATTIC.

By TEMPLE BAILEY.

Miss Cynthia's attic was fragrant with aromatic herbs. Little bags of lavender and of dried rose leaves hung from the rafters and mingled their delicate perfume with its coarser aroma of sage and sweet marjoram and thyme and summer savory.

On autumn afternoons the attic was golden with sunshine, and from the little peaked window one could see the long white road and the blue hills beyond.

It was to this fragrant and gold-lighted attic that Miss Cynthia would come when the summer rush was over, and in its peace and quiet try to forget that she was worn and worried and withered.

At thirty-five one should not be worried and withered. But hard lives do not make for youth and freshness, and Miss Cynthia had always drudged. Work had been the watchword on the farm, and when prosperity had come in later years the habit of keeping summer boarders had become fixed, and even after the death of her parents Miss Cynthia had continued it.

But with September came rest and freedom, and it was then that Miss Cynthia sought the attic and wrote in her diary.

The diary was a safe outlet for her woes. There were pages blotted with the tears she had shed when she had closed the volume of her first romance, and two leaves, on which she had penned a poetic swan song of affection, were pinned together with a black pin!

Miss Cynthia had old-fashioned ideas about love. She had loved once, and hence there could be no other affair. It mattered nothing that the man in the case was married and had grown fat and puffy and uninteresting. It was not the man, but the idea, and to that idea Miss Cynthia was true!

To be sure, no second suitor had entered her life, so that there had been no severe tax upon her constancy. But the roses had gone out of her cheeks when she was twenty, and she had twisted her hair in an uncompromising knot and had, at that early date, given herself up to mourning and to memories.

"You're silly," Martha Ann told her one bright September morning, as Miss Cynthia, with her black diary in her hand, prepared to ascend to the attic. "Why don't you go out and visit and have a good time, instead of writing in that dark old place?"

Martha Ann was an old and privileged servant, but Miss Cynthia would brook no interference with her acts of affliction.

"I don't think good times are my portion, Martha Ann," she said, and went up the stairway thoughtfully.

Halfway up she paused to say: "Make a good vegetable soup for lunch, Martha Ann. I'll throw down a bunch of my herbs. Soup will taste good on a cool day."

"'Love,'" wrote Miss Cynthia in her little book, "'is of man's life a thing apart; 'tis woman's whole existence!'"

When she had rounded off the last prim letter, she bit the end of her pencil and sighed and looked out of the peaked window.

Far down the road she could see a cloud of dust. Coming nearer, the cloud showed itself the forerunner of an automobile.

The big machine swerved out of the road and into Miss Cynthia's own drive. It stopped at her door, and she had to lean far out of the peaked window to see Martha in her gingham apron speaking to the occupant.

Miss Cynthia could not hear a word, and she almost fell over the sill in the effort to satisfy her curiosity. She saw Martha Ann go in, and presently she felt a pull at the back of her dress.

"Goodness," Martha Ann said crossly, "I called and called, and I couldn't make you hear. That man wants something to eat."

"What?" Miss Cynthia gasped. "But he doesn't look like a tramp, Martha Ann."

"Tramps don't ride in automobiles," Martha Ann sniffed; "he says he's been riding all the morning, and he just couldn't find a place to eat, and he would be glad to pay for a meal. He understood that we took boarders, he said."

"Well, you go down and hurry the soup and make an omelette and some hot biscuits and I will talk to him, Martha Ann."

"You'd better stop in your room and primp a little," Martha Ann advised; "he's awfully good looking."

"The idea," said Miss Cynthia, with dignity.

She was a little sorry, however, when she reached the sitting-room that she had not taken the girl's advice. For the man that she greeted was big and blond and prosperous looking. It developed that he slurred his grammar, but as he leaned back in the biggest rocking chair and talked in his hearty voice, Miss Cynthia decided that he was very attractive.

"I expect you think it's queer my droppin' in on you this way?" he said, as Martha Ann announced lunch. "But I couldn't pass the poppies and the peonies in the yard. My mother used to have an old-fashioned garden, and there was something about yours that reminded me of it, and I felt as if you'd give me a home-cooked meal. A man gets tired of hotels."

Over the steaming, savory soup he expanded still more.

"This is the kind I like," he said. "With all the vegetables in it, and herbs—I'll bet you've got a lot of herbs tied up in your attic—my mother had. She said the attic was the pleasantest place in the house, and I used to think so, too."

Miss Cynthia felt that at last she had met an understanding soul.

"Would you like to go up after lunch," she asked eagerly, "there is a fine view from the little dormer window."

"My, how nice it smells," said the big man as he seated himself in Miss Cynthia's favorite corner. The black diary lay open by his side. His eyes caught the line,

Love is of man's life a thing apart;
'Tis woman's whole existence.

"Oh, tommy-rot," he said, "did you write that?"

"Yes," Miss Cynthia admitted, "Byron said it, you know."

"Well, he didn't know what he was talking about. Why, if I loved a woman I should just love her all over—no halfway business for me."

"Oh," Miss Cynthia gasped. There was something in his tone that made his statement next door to a declaration—a fervency that positively thrilled her.

"I am awfully glad I came," he said as they went downstairs; "I am a stranger in this neighborhood, but if you will let me come again I will be mighty glad. It seems like my own folks."

"You must come real often," Miss Cynthia urged, and hoped that Martha Ann would not hear her invitation.

"Gee, this is the way to live," said her visitor as he stood on the steps and surveyed the quiet garden, the family of gray pussy cats in the sunny porch corner, the gray horse in the paddock.

"I should think traveling around in your automobile would be interesting," Miss Cynthia ventured.

"Well, 'tis," he agreed. "Do you like it?"

"I have never been in one," Miss Cynthia admitted.

"What?" he asked. "Oh, look here, you run right up and put on your hat and I'll take you."

"Oh," said Miss Cynthia, all a-flutter, "I wonder if I can?"

"Of course you can," said the gentleman securely, "I won't run away with you."

Safe in her own room, Miss Cynthia consulted Martha Ann.

"You'd better go with us," she said, "I don't think it's quite proper, Martha Ann, do you?"

"I wouldn't go in one of them things if you'd give it to me," Martha Ann said, "and he's all right. I saw his name on a bundle of papers he left in the automobile. He's Andrew Briggs, the millionaire that's bought the factory. He is building a church and a library for the town, and I guess he's respectable."

Miss Cynthia dressed in a whirl. Of what account was that little romance of years ago, when at her gates was a prince like this?

She came down with four yards of white chiffon tied around her hat. It had been bought for a waist, but, worn as a veil, it made a fascinating frame for her flushed little face. She had loosened her hair, and the soft brown curls gave youthfulness to her expression.

Mr. Briggs eyed her with appreciation.

"I'm awfully glad I met you," he said again, as he helped her into his car.

Martha looked after them as they whirled down the long white road.

"Well, I never," she remarked to the pussy cats. "Did you ever see two people take to each other like that? I bet it will be a match—"

And it was!

REFLECTIONS OF A BACHELOR GIRL

By HELEN ROWLAND.

One touch of highball makes the whole world spin.

A woman doesn't really "live" until she is married; and after that she sometimes doesn't want to live.

The man who kisses a woman at the first opportunity is either a fool or a cad; the man who waits for the second opportunity is a philosopher; the man who waits for the third opportunity is a speculator; and the man who waits any longer is a freak.

No man was ever so bald that a woman couldn't make him blush with pleasure by telling him what a pretty color his hair must have been.

In the face of a man's childlike vanity it is so difficult for a girl to decide to be ready when he arrives and thereby look as though she had been waiting for him, or to keep him waiting and look as though she had been primping for him.

'Tis best for a man to be square, but a woman is more lucky to be round.

FROM WOMAN'S POINT OF VIEW

Heroic measures are necessary to reduce flesh, and because women have not the patience and persistency needed to get rid of unwelcome weight we find many of them accepting the discomfort of shortened breath and the humiliation of loss of good looks. Reason as you may, extremes are not attractive, but while the thin woman can conceal her lack by a clever arrangement of clothing, superfluous flesh refuses to hide under any covering.

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There are harmless methods of reducing weight, but no particularly pleasant ones. There are women who take great risks like one I knew, who purchased two bottles of very expensive medicine and felt no regret when one exploded in the closet. She was too ill to consider anything very deeply, for one bottle put her in bed for a month with the constant attendance of the family doctor, and lost only a few ounces of flesh at that. The same woman refused to seriously consider a system of diet and exercise such as singers have found very satisfactory.

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I lived in neighboring apartments to those of a wealthy woman who was so intent on losing flesh that she died during the process. She literally starved to death, for she cut down her food supply so vigorously that her health was undermined. When she realized her danger it was too late to remedy the evil. There is no denying that most of us eat too much, and a good bit of elimination might be used without bad results. There should not be too long an interval between meals, but the amount of food might be cut down.

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This is the method employed by society women who realize that youth and flesh do not go together. A slender body makes many a grandmother a dangerous rival to a younger woman, and to secure and keep a good figure after years pile up is not an easy matter. The laws of life, according to the accepted beauty code, mean care in every department, but the stomach comes first. Years of experiment ought to teach a woman what she can eat and drink with good results and what she should avoid, how many hours of sleep she needs at night, and how much rest she should take through the day.

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I doubt if any of us ever had too much fresh air and exercise. We can sleep too much, though the great majority gets much too small a portion of nature's sweet restorer. Natural slumber is not the rule; the average woman squirms in her bed till her hair is a mass of tangles. I know one woman who sleeps naturally—one who quietly slips into an easy position between the sheets, closes her eyes, goes to sleep like a child, and does not alter her position all night. No matter how weary she may get through the day, she is thoroughly rested after her night's sleep, because she has the art of dropping all care and thoroughly relaxing body and brain.

BETTY BRADEEN.

HATS FOR CHILDREN.

The nicest little hats may be made for the children of the family, with the least expense and trouble, of pique. It is only necessary to cut two circles of the material for the brim, sew them together, and bind them with white tape. Cut a smaller circle from the center of this to fit the head of the child, and bind this in the same way. The brim is then finished.

To make the crown, cut another circle of the pique about the same size as the brim. This does not need to be lined; bind it and make buttonholes around the edge. Then sew small buttons around the inside circle of the brim, and the whole hat is complete.

Needless to say, a machine does wonders to help the making of these easy little hats, and when they are finished, they need only be unbuttoned to make the cleansing process simple in the extreme.

Sometimes clever mothers prefer the hats to be made of material to match the dresses, and then scraps may be utilized. A yard square will make a hat. When really dressy ones are desired, they are made of linen and scalloped round the edge with a buttonhole stitch. But, after all, children's garments are pretty if neatly made without much trimming.

Has No Equal.

"You have no dukes," the Briton said,
"Nor earls, nor viscounts here."
"No," said the Yank, "we have a land
That's quite without a peer."

—Boston Transcript.

UNDER UMBRELLAS.

Ways of the Engaged Couple, the Married Couple, and the Woman.

It takes an umbrella to denote the changes and chances of this mortal life.

Now, when you see a man holding an umbrella over a woman and cataracts pour over that man's hat you can be certain that denotes courtship.

If, however, he lets the rain drip on the woman's hat and down her neck there isn't the slightest doubt that signifies marriage.

When an umbrella is placed in a rack on a rainy day it denotes almost invariably a change in ownership, and lastly, when an umbella is carried in a position calculated to remove any one's eye, it is one to a million a woman is behind it.

HUSBANDS AND WIVES.

Mistaken.

From the Bohemian.

"Ah, I see you are married," exclaimed the merchant.

"No, sir," replied the applicant for a position. "I got this scar in a railroad accident."

A Matter of Surprise.

From Judge.

Lone Widow—Poor, dear man! he lived only three months after our marriage.

Old Jenkins—Ahem! As long as that, mum?

His Happiness Explained.

From Brooklyn Life.

He—Scraggs seems very happy for a man just returned from the burial of one of his wife's dearest friends.

She—Indeed? Who was it?

He—Her pug dog.

Changed Color.

From Harper's Weekly.

Howell—Is your wife a blond or a brunette?

Powell—I think she is a chameleon.

Wanted.

From London Opinion.

Brown—I made a remark to my wife last week, and she has not spoken to me since.

Robinson (eagerly)—What was it?

METHOD OF PERSUASION.

How a Determined Mother Obtained a "Voluntary" Confession.

From Tit-Bits.

It becomes evident from the following story, which hails from a North country town, that there are widely varying ideas in existence as to what constitutes voluntary testimony on any subject:

"Did I understand you to say that this boy voluntarily confessed his share in the mischief done to the schoolhouse?" asked the magistrate, addressing the determined-looking female parent of a small and dirty boy charged with being concerned in a recent raid upon an unpopular schoolmaster.

"Yes, sir, he did," the woman responded. "I just had to persuade him a little, and then he told me the whole thing voluntarily."

"How did you persuade him?" queried his worship.

"Well, first I gave him a good licking," said the firm parent, "and then I put him to bed without supper, and I took his clothes away and told him he'd stay in bed till he confessed what he'd done, if 'twas the rest of his days, and I should lick him again in the morning. And in less than half an hour he told me the whole story voluntarily."

When Society Is Serious.

Lady Gordon, in Western Mail.

People who inveigh against the frivolity of society don't know what they are talking about; the higher you go in social circles the more solemnity do you find.

For sheer, unmitigated seriousness, nothing can equal that found in a country house, where the party is composed of people of sixteen quarterings, all presumably collected for the purpose of mutual amusement. Not even the Nonconformist conscience on Sunday could be more overwhelmingly grave.

Strange.

From the Detroit Free Press.

"How does it seem to be divorced?" asked the curious young thing.

"Well," replied her wise friend, "it seems a little strange at first. It was quite a while before I could get used to sitting down to supper and not having any one to kick about the food."